

Message Text

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PAGE 01 HONG K 10131 090914Z

15

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-10 ISO-00 NIC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-15 SSO-00

NSCE-00 AF-10 OMB-01 DRC-01 /168 W
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P R 090825Z OCT 73

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8408

INFO USINT CAIRO

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 10131

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR CH EG SY IS

SUBJ: PEKING VOICES ITS SUPPORT OF EGYPT AND SYRIA

SUMMARY. THE PRC HAS CONDEMNED ISRAEL AS THE AGGRESSOR IN THE MIDDLE EAST FIGHTING AND EXPRESSED POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR THE ARABS. ITS REPORTING ON THE WAR, HOWEVER, SUGGESTS THAT THE PRC DOES NOT ANTICIPATE MAJOR ARAB GAINS IN RECOVERING TERRITORY. END SUMMARY.

1. PRC FOREIGN MINISTER CHI PENG-FEI SAID OCTOBER 8 THAT "THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE HEREBY EXPRESS STRONG INDIGNATION AT AND MOST STERN CONDEMNATION OF THIS NEW ACT OF AGGRESSION BY ISRAEL" AND THAT THE PRC STANDS "FIRMLY ON THE SIDE OF THE EGYPTIAN, SYRIAN, PALESTINIAN AND OTHER ARAB PEOPLE AGAINST ISRAEL AGGRESSION." CHI'S COMMENTS TO THE AMBASSADORS OF EGYPT AND SYRIA AND THE PLO REPRESENTATIVES, WHO WERE CALLED BY THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, WERE QUOTED BY NCNA ALONG WITH A SERIES OF
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PAGE 02 HONG K 10131 090914Z

REPORTS OF THE ARAB VERSION OF THE FIGHTING IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

THE REPORTS EMPHASIZED THE "DEFENSIVE" NATURE OF THE ARAB ACTIONS, AND PLAYED UP THE PALESTINIAN ROLE. THEY DENOUNCED "ISRAELI ARMED AGGRESSION," SUPPORTED THE "HEROIC RESISTENCE" OF EGYPT, SYRIA, AND THE PALESTINIAN GUERRILLAS, AND EMPHASIZED THE NEED FOR ARAB UNITY IN THE STRUGGLE. A PEOPLE'S DAILY "COMMENTATOR" ARTICLE OF THE SAME DAY SAID THE WAR WAS A "LONG-PLANNED ACT" DESIGNED FOR TERRITORIAL EXPANSION AND TO ENABLE ISRAEL TO "IMPOSE ITS WILL UPON THE ARAB COUNTRIES AGAIN BY MEANS OF WAR." "COMMENTATOR" CONTINUED THAT THE "FRENZIED AGGRESSION OF ISRAEL" WAS THE INEVITABLE RESULT OF THE POLICIES OF THE SUPERPOWERS--US SUPPORT FOR ISREALI ZIONISM INCLUDING " A GREAT DEAL OF MILITARY AID" AND SOVIET MANPOWER SUPPORT BY ALLOWING LARGE NUMBER OF SOVIET JEWS TO EMIGRATE TO ISRAEL. THE ARTICLE REPEATS THE CHINESE POSITION THAT THE UNREST CONTINUES IN THE MIDDLE EAST BECAUSE OF THE "COLLUSION AND CONGENTION" OF THE SUPERPOWERS WHO WISH TO MAINTAIN AND EXPAND THEIR RESPECTIVE SPHERES OF INCLUENCE.

2. COMMENT. CHINESE DIPLOMATS AT THE UN CAN OF COURSE BE EXPECTED TO ADOPT THIS LINE AND, WHATEVER THE OUTCOME, PORTRAY CHINA AS THE TRUE FRIEND OF THE ARABS. THE CHINESE ARE HOPING FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO WEDGE THEMSELVES BETWEEN THE ARABS AND THE SOVIETS. IN PARTICULAR, THEY SEEM TO BE LAYING THE GROUNDWORK TO DENOUNCE ANY SETBACK FOR THE ARABS AS THE PRODUCT OF SOVIET-US COLLUSION. EGYPTIAN VICE PRESIDENT HUSSEIN EL SHAFEI DURING HIS VISIT TO PEKING IN LATE SEPTEMBER MAY HAVE GIVEN THE CHINESE SOME INDICATION OF ARAB OBJECTIVES. IN ANY EVENT, THE TONE OF THE CHINESE REPORTING ON THE CONFLICT SUGGESTS THAT THE PRC DOES NOT ANTICIPATE MAJOR ARAB GAINS IN RECOVERING TERRITORY. GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, CHINA'S PLEDGES OF SUPPORT APPEAR CAUTIOUSLY FRAMED AND DO NOT SUGGEST ANY MAJOR MATERIAL ASSISTANCE MIGHT BE FORTHCOMING.
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